

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03

INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01

SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 PA-04

USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /192 W
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R 311251Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7957

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, NG

SUBJ: TEXACO OIL EXPLORATION

REF: NIAMEY 1645 (NOTAL)

1. TEXACO DIRECTOR HABERMANN, WHO VISITING FROM DAKAR, AND LOCAL TEXACO REPRESENTATIVE BARRINGER CALLED MAY 28 TO REPORT ON STATUS OF TEXACO'S OIL CONCESSIONS IN EASTER NIGER. HABERMANN SAID THAT HE WAS HERE TO CHECK IN WITH NEW GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONCERED WITH OIL AND TO GET BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF NEW GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES TOWARDS FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES. HE ANNOUNCED HIMSELF AS SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF HIS SOUNDINGS.

2. HABERMANN AND BARRINGER HAD JUST COME FROM USEFUL MEETING WITH MAJOR SANI, WHOSE SEVERAL PORTFOLIOS INCLUDE MINES AND GEOLOGY. THEY SAID MAJOR SANI TOOK LINE THAT ALTHOUGH
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NIGER WAS POOR COUNTRY, IT PREFERRED TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND WAS UNCOMFORTABLE IN ACCEPTING CHARITY OR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, NEW GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED THAT FOREIGN CAPITAL WAS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP COUNTRY AND ESPECIALLY TO PUT NIGER'S OIL AND MINERAL DEPOSITS TO WORK. GON, THEREFORE, LOOKED FORWARD TO COOPERATING CLOSELY WITH FOREIGN FIRMS INTERESTED IN NIGER'S DEVELOPMENT AND HE ASSURED TEXACO REPRESENTATIVES THAT AS LONG AS THEY WERE SERIOUS ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND THEIR EFFORTS WERE IN NIGER'S INTERESTS, TEXACO AND SIMILAR FOREIGN COMPANIES COULD REST ASSURED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD HONOR COMMITMENTS OF PREVIOUS REGIME AND COOPERATE FULLY. AS INDICATION OF NIGER'S INTENTIONS, MAJOR SANI INFORMED TEXACO REPRESENTATIVES THAT CABINET HAD JUST PASSED TWO DECREES PENDING SEVERAL MONTHS WHICH APPROVED EXXON'S PARTICIPATION IN TWO CONCESSIONS HELD BY TEXACO. THIS WAS LEGAL FORMALITY WHICH TEXACO HAD REQUESTED SOME TIME AGO.

3. HABERMANN CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH NEW GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE AND SAID TEXACO WOULD PROCEED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITH DRILLING OPERATIONS AT LOCATION IN EASTERN NIGER NEAR FACHI. FIRST STEP WAS TO ESTABLISH CAMP AT FACHI, LOCATE WATER SUPPLY AND BUILD STRIP FOR AIR DELIVERY OF OIL RIG. HABERMANN DESCRIBED PROSPECTS FOR OIL AS "PROMISING", ADDING THAT SHOULD OIL BE DISCOVERED HE ANTICIPATED TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH GON. HE EXPRESSED HOPE ENTIRE OPERATION WOULD BE COMPLETED IN SIX MONTHS AND ESTIMATED THAT DURING THIS PERIOD BETWEEN TWO AND THREE HUNDRED EXPATRIATES WOULD BE SHUTTLED IN AND OUT OF NIGER TO DRILL SITE. THIS IN ITSELF WOULD GIVE SOME BOOST TO LOCAL ECONOMY.

COMMENT: HABERMANN'S REPORT OF MAJOR SANI'S ARTICULATION OF GON POLICY TOWARDS FOREIGN COMPANIES AND ESPECIALLY THOSE INVOLVED IN EXPLORATION OF NIGER'S NATURAL RESOURCES IS CONSISTANT WITH PREVIOUS COMMENTS MADE TO ME ON SAME SUBJECT BY UN ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL DJERMAKOYE (REFTEL). AS LONG AS FOREIGN COMPANIES APPEAR TO BE SERIOUSLY ENGAGED IN THEIR BUSINESS HERE, I THINK IT SAFE TO ASSUME THEY WILL BE WELCOME AND GON WILL LIVE UP TO TERMS OF AGREEMENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH THEM. HOWEVER, IF AND WHEN OIL IS DISCOVERED, FOREIGN COMPANIES CAN EXPECT SOME HARD BARGAINING WITH GON. HABERMANN RECOGNIZED THIS. END COMMENT. HECK

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